

Montgomery transgender aide sues county for \$5 million

By: [Alan Suderman](#)
Examiner Staff Writer
March 18, 2010



(photo courtesy danabeyer.com)

Trachtenberg adviser helped craft anti-discrimination bill

A transgender aide to a Montgomery County councilwoman is suing the county for \$5 million, saying it broke the anti-discrimination law she helped write.

Dr. Dana Beyer, a senior policy adviser for Councilwoman Duchy Trachtenberg, D-at large, helped draft and guide a 2007 bill through the County Council that outlawed discrimination based on gender identity. The transgender law passed the council unanimously.

Dana Beyer

- » Graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Cornell University, 1974
- » Medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania, 1978
- » Worked abroad in Kenya and Nepal
- » Residency in eye surgery at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Miami
- » Member of Tiferet Israel Congregation
- » Served on the Obama campaign's national and state LGBT steering committees

Now she said the county's ethics commission broke that law in its investigation of Beyer's opposition to a citizens group that tried to overturn the same law.

Beyer already filed a complaint with the county's human rights office, but she said that complaint is being ignored, prompting her to file a lawsuit. She said the \$5 million figure, which is split between \$1 million for economic damages and \$4 million for emotional distress, was meant to get the county's "attention."

"I'm trying to make a point here, I'm not looking for money," she said.

Beyer, who is on voluntary unpaid leave from Trachtenberg's office and is a former eye surgeon, is running for the state House of Delegates.

The citizens group that opposed the law, Maryland Citizens for a Responsible Government, filed a complaint with the county's ethics commission charging that Beyer used her position in county government to try to intimidate those opposed to the transgender law while they were gathering signatures outside a grocery store.

After a seven-month investigation by the county attorney, the ethics commission found that Beyer violated county law and called for a hearing. Beyer said the commission used flimsy evidence to reach that conclusion and acted outside its normal practices in investigating the complaint.

She said the commission authorized an improper search of her work computer without her consent, leaked details of the investigation and threatened to investigate the circumstances of her hiring, all with the goal of "embarrassing" and "harassing" Beyer because of her transgender status.

Trachtenberg has accused the county of employing "KGB"-style tactics.

The attorney representing the county could not be reached for comment by deadline. But Ruth Jacobs, who headed the group opposed to the transgender law, said part of her group's concern was that the law would give "special privileges" to certain citizens.

"The bill empowered people to cry foul when maybe foul wasn't there," Jacobs said.

asuderman@washingtonexaminer.com